



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

****GUEST EDITORIAL****

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Preparing students for the future

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

Wisconsin educators are a part of an innovative and exciting partnership with business, industry, and labor to offer students work-based learning opportunities that will help prepare them to be the competent, competitive, and productive workforce we need for the future.

Through work-based learning partnerships, students are able to see and understand how academic and technical skills come to life in dynamic work settings. Work-based learning offers both the rich context and career awareness that is so important for our students' total learning experience and will help them move into jobs that better match their skills and interests.

While work-based learning better prepares students for further education and careers, our educational system gains a closer connection to the world of work, which will help students become more productive citizens upon graduation. Additionally, business and industry become more involved with education, and our state's economy moves forward with students ready—academically and technically—for the ever-changing world of work.

Wisconsin's work-based learning experiences include a variety of models that can be adapted to best meet the needs of students, interested employers, and school curriculum. Work-based models based on close collaboration with business, industry, and labor, currently include:

Internships which guide students as they move from school to the workplace by offering hands-on learning in business and industry settings. The internship is school supervised, may be paid or unpaid, and is designed to give students a better sense of jobs within a particular business or industry.

Job Shadowing which is a school-supervised career exploration activity that can begin in middle school and continue through high school. Students visit worksites and shadow employees as they perform their jobs. Job-shadows are short-term with an emphasis on observation.

(more)

Youth Apprenticeship which is a two-year program requiring a minimum of 900 hours of paid work experience and four semesters of related classroom instruction based on industry developed skill standards. The Department of Workforce Development issues a certificate of Occupational Proficiency upon completion.

Cooperative Education Skill Standards Certificate Programs which provide supervised, one-year, paid work experience in a career and technical education area combined with related classroom instruction. Students work toward mastering industry-endorsed competencies and receive a Department of Public Instruction certificate of proficiency upon successful completion.

Work-based learning provides avenues for all students to connect their educational goals and skills to career opportunities. We value the business, industry, and labor partnerships with education that support quality work-based learning experiences and encourage more businesses to make these connections with their local schools.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTE: To download a high resolution photo of the state superintendent, visit the Department of Public Instruction “Media Contacts and Resources” webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >.